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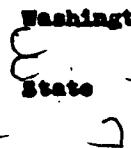
REPORT NO. R : RIA-353
DATE INFORMATION: 31 March 1948
DATE OF REPORT : 14 April 1948

ARABS TO REQUEST EXTENSION OF BRITISH CONTROL IN PALESTINE

1. Abd-al-Bahman AZAM Pasha, the Secretary of the Arab League; Jamil Bey MARDAM Bey; Riyad Bey SULEIMAN; Taha al-HASIMI, the Grand Mufti; Hajj Amin al-HUSSEINI; the Mufti of Damascus Mohamed Shukri al-USTUWANI, met at the home of Shukri Bey QUWWATLI, Syrian President and discussed the plan of the British to withdraw from Palestine on May 15. AZAM Pasha stated that if the British actually did withdraw from Palestine, the situation would be very difficult for the Arabs, as America would probably use her influence to bring about the partition of Palestine. He urged that all the Arab states should try to convince the British to stay in Palestine, in order that the Arabs may gain valuable time. Meanwhile the Arabs will work to convince the Security Council to drop entirely the Palestine question.
2. The Grand Mufti then spoke and exhibited documents which had been sent to him from Palestine affirming that the Jews have begun to nominate those who shall govern the new Jewish State after the British withdraw. He approved the suggestion of AZAM Pasha and said it was necessary to convince the British to stay longer than May 15 to give the Arabs more time to change the attitude of the Security Council.
3. After long discussion, Hajj Amin suggested that the Arab League should request the British to stay in Palestine until the end of this year at least. He stated that it is the duty of the Arab League--and all the Arab states--to prepare to fight the Jews and to make it clear that the Arab League, since the Jews are considering themselves free to establish an independent state after May 15, is not to be held responsible for the fierce fighting which will take place after the British withdraw.
4. It was finally agreed to contact the British officially through one of the Governments belonging to the Arab League.

(Source obtained this information from Ahmad al-HIPA'I, Minister of Justice and of Public Works in Syria, and a brother-in-law of Abd-al-Bahman AZAM Pasha.)

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